

Office of
Berkeley County Prosecuting Attorney

BERKELEY COUNTY COURT HOUSE

100 W. KING STREET

MARTINSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA 25401

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PRESS RELEASE

On Saturday, January 25, 1992 the Martinsburg City Police Department, the West Virginia State Medical Examiner's Office, the Berkeley County Medical Examiner and the Berkeley County Prosecuting Attorney's Office concluded their investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of Joseph Daniel Casolaro, 44, of Fairfax, Virginia. Consistent with the original theory of the manner of death, Deputy Chief Medical Examiner Dr. James L. Frost has ruled the manner of death to be suicide.

Over 1,000 man hours have been expended by the Martinsburg City Police Department in investigating various and numerous theories suggesting Daniel Casolaro was murdered. No facts were developed to support or confirm these allegations. Furthermore, the physical evidence recovered at the scene and the home of the deceased together with the medical examination of the body are wholly consistent with the finding of suicide.

The following physical evidence was observed or recovered at the scene:

1. There was no evidence of forced entry.
2. There was no evidence of a struggle.
3. The clothing of the deceased was neatly arranged without sign of theft, disarray or disturbance.
4. Occupants of adjoining rooms who were located and interviewed by police reported no sounds of a disturbance, no raised voices, and no calls for assistance.
5. A suicide note was found at the scene and stated the following:

"To my loved ones,
Please forgive me--most especially
my son--and be understanding. God
will let me in."

6. The West Virginia State Police Crime Lab examined this document and concluded that the writing on the note was prepared by the deceased. An ink pen found near the legal pad upon which the note had been written was examined to determine whether its ink was consistent with the ink of the suicide note.

Forensic analysis found no differences in the ink used to prepare the note and the ink in the pen.

7. A single latent fingerprint was lifted from the legal pad and analysis of the print determined it to be the right thumb print of the deceased.
8. Two latent prints were lifted from the bathroom sink and were identified to be the left index and left middle finger prints of the deceased.
9. Two latent prints were lifted from the driver's window of the vehicle of the deceased and were identified to be the left index and left middle fingerprints of the deceased.
10. One unidentifiable latent print was lifted from the bottom of an unused ashtray in the hotel room.
11. A box of razor blades was located in the hotel room lying beside the suicide note. Four single edge razor blades were found in the box and one single edge razor blade was found in the bathtub with the deceased, thereby accounting for all blades originally packaged in the box.
12. Hair and fiber analyses were conducted on items recovered at the death scene. No evidence consistent with the theory of another individual being present in the room was developed.
13. Two bottles of Caves Alianca white wine were found in the hotel room. One unopened bottle was found in the luggage of the deceased. One half-full bottle was found on the bathroom floor. A later review of the wines stocked by the deceased in his home revealed two bottles of the same type of wine.
14. An empty prescription bottle for Vicodin, which had been issued to the deceased in 1987, was found in his luggage. Traces of the drug oxycodone, a component of the drug Vicodin, were identified in his blood.

15. Two white tall-kitchen garbage bags were found in the bathtub with the deceased. Contained within his luggage was an opened box of a similar type of white Hefty trash bags. Two bags were missing from the box.
16. Two used shoestrings--one located in the bathtub water and one lying on the deceased's neck--were recovered at the scene. However, no signs of strangulation appeared on the body. Furthermore, an examination of the home of the deceased produced two sneakers that were missing shoestrings.
17. No journalistic or personal notes of the deceased were located in the hotel room or in his vehicle. Investigators and a canine unit searched both the interior and exterior areas of the hotel, including dumpsters, as well as an approximate one mile stretch of highway along Interstate 81 near the hotel.

The autopsy determined the cause of death to be exsanguinating hemorrhage from multiple incised wounds of both wrists. It also revealed extensive changes of multiple sclerosis in the brain and focal moderately severe arteriosclerosis of the coronary arteries. Toxicologic studies on blood specimens obtained by the county medical examiner shortly after the body was found and on urine obtained at autopsy revealed a low blood alcohol level, low levels of the components of Vicodin, a trace amount of a tricyclic anti-depressant. A source for the tricyclic anti-depressant has not been found. However, no substance that could have incapacitated the subject or rendered him unconscious was detected.

The embalming of the body following the initial scene investigation and examination of the body by the county medical examiner in no way hampered the subsequent autopsy and toxicologic studies.

The investigation, in all its aspects, also constituted a "psychological autopsy" of the deceased. The aspects of intent and motive have been evaluated in assigning a manner of death.

Information obtained during the investigation revealed that at the time of his death, Mr. Casolaro had recently had a third proposal for his book turned down for publication. In addition, a balloon mortgage payment on his home in the amount of \$178,790.98 was due on August 9, 1991, the day before his death. Reports were received suggesting that a 30-day extension of the due date had been granted; however, no confirmation of this information was ever received.

Police photographs taken of the scene, together with the physical evidence and Dr. Frost's autopsy report were reviewed and examined by Dr. Henry C. Lee, Ph.D. of the Connecticut State Police Forensic Science Laboratory. As Director and Chief Criminalist of the Lab, Dr. Lee is a world-renowned expert in blood spatter analysis and reconstructive techniques. At his direction, a four-planed photographic mural of the death scene was created utilizing the police photographs taken initially at the scene. His opinion, based upon his review of the evidence and the mural, is that none of the physical evidence found at the scene is inconsistent with that of a suicide.

During this investigation, we have cooperated with requests for information from federal authorities. To our knowledge, no federal law enforcement authority has expressed any interest in assuming jurisdiction of this investigation. No further investigation is anticipated. However, all physical evidence collected has been preserved and will be secured and maintained by the Martinsburg City Police Department in accordance with standard police procedures.

PRESS RELEASE
August 15, 1991

On Saturday, August 10, 1991, The Martinsburg City Police Department, rescue personnel, and Berkeley County Medical Examiner Sandra Brining, were called to the Sheraton Martinsburg Inn, room 517. Upon entering the room, the individuals found the body of Joseph Daniel Casolaro, 44, of Fairfax, Virginia. The body was found in the bathroom, in the tub, with numerous cuts to the wrist area of both arms. Upon examination of the body, the Medical Examiner determined that the death was a result of a suicide. After further examination of the scene, the Coroner released the body to Brown's Funeral Home.

The Martinsburg City Police Department immediately contacted the Fairfax County Police Department, to assist in locating the family of the deceased. When no affirmative response was received from the Fairfax County authorities, by Monday, August 12, 1991, attempts were then made by The Martinsburg City Police Department, who were successful in locating family members. At that time, due to the large number of reports received by the investigating team concerning the nature of the deceased's work, it was determined that further investigation into the death was warranted.

Investigation of the scene showed no sign of forced entry to the room, or any sign of a struggle. Investigative personnel interviewed numerous individuals who may have had contact with the deceased on the days previous to his death.

On Tuesday, August 13, 1991, the body of the deceased was transported to West Virginia University Hospital in Morgantown, for an autopsy to be performed. The findings of Deputy State Medical Examiner, Doctor Jack Frost, who performed the autopsy, were that there were numerous cuts to both wrists. These cuts were of a depth to cause extensive bleeding. There were no other contusions, lacerations, or other trauma to the body that would indicate a struggle. The examination further revealed that the deceased was suffering from Multiple Sclerosis. Results of all of the toxicology studies are yet to be completed, however, there was no alcohol found in the blood. In the opinion of Doctor Frost, the embalming of the body did not hamper the performance of the autopsy. The cause of death listed on the death certificate is "exsanguinating hemorrhage" due to "multiple incized wounds of the wrists".

The investigation continues, however, at this time, no information inconsistent with the original theory of suicide has been found.

Perry F. Smith
Chief of Police

CITY OF MARTINSBURG

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Emergency 911



232 North Queen Street
Martinsburg, WV 25401
(304) 263-3311

PRESS RELEASE

On Thursday, August 15, 1991, at 4:30 P.M., the Martinsburg Police Department in conjunction with the Berkeley Co. Pros. Attorney's Office, Berkeley Co. Coroner, and West Virginia State Medical Examiner's office will hold a press conference at the Martinsburg Police Department. This press conference will deal with the death investigation of Joseph Daniel Casolaro.

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FOR DISSEMINATION TO PRESS

RE: CASOLARO DEATH

August 14, 1991

The Martinsburg Police Department along with the Berkeley County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, will hold a press conference in the future, when results received from the State Medical Examiner's Office and investigative materials have been reviewed by these agencies.

* att: Desk personel

when news sources call in ref. this investigation, please advise them of the above. If they wish to provide their names, agencies, phone and FAX numbers, please make note of this information on the attached sheets. There will be no other information released until further notice.

Auth. Capt T. C. Anderson
Cindy Gaither, Asst.
Prosecuting Atty.

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AUGUST 16, 1991

SHERATON INN MARTINSBURG

PRESS RELEASE

ON AUGUST 10 AT APPROXIMATELY 12:59 P.M. DANIEL J. CASOLARO'S BODY WAS DISCOVERED IN THE BATH TUB IN ROOM #517 BY A HOTEL EMPLOYEE.

MARTINSBURG POLICE AND RESCUE WERE NOTIFIED IMMEDIATELY BY A HOTEL REPRESENTATIVE. THE FIRST OFFICER ARRIVED ON THE SCENE WITHIN MINUTES AND TOOK CHARGE.

MR. CASOLARO CHECKED INTO THE SHERATON ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 8TH AROUND 11:45 A.M. FOR ONE NIGHT, WITHOUT A RESERVATION. ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 9TH, HE INFORMED THE HOTEL THAT HE WOULD BE STAYING OVER UNTIL SATURDAY, AUGUST 10TH.

OUR RECORDS INDICATE THAT MR. CASOLARO DID NOT MAKE ANY PHONE CALLS FROM HIS ROOM DURING HIS STAY.

THIS IS ALL THE INFORMATION WE ARE PERMITTED TO RELEASE. QUESTIONS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE MARTINSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT.

THE SHERATON INN MARTINSBURG WOULD LIKE TO OFFER OUR MOST SINCERE CONDOLENCES TO MR. CASOLARO'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS AT THIS TRAGIC TIME.

SAM W. FLOYD
MANAGING DIRECTOR
SHERATON INN MARTINSBURG



AUGUST 16, 1991

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SHERATON INN MARTINSBURG



PRESS RELEASE

The deceased a 44 year old white male was located in a room of a local motel. This was Saturday, August 10, 1991. Investigation personnel and the County Coroner were notified and responded. The body was transported to the Brown Funeral Home. Attempts to contact the next-of-kin, through Fairfax Co. VA authorities was unsuccessful until Monday August 12, 1991, when the Martinsburg Police Dept. made contact with family members. Additional information was provided to the Martinsburg Police by the family and other sources.

The unattended death investigation is ongoing. An autopsy will be performed at the West Virginia University Medical Center on Wednesday, August 14, 1991 by a West Virginia Medical Examiner.

Additional details will be following as the investigation warrants.

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232 NORTH QUEEN ST.
MARTINSBURG, WV 25401
(304) 263-0805
FAX - (304) 263-0808

TELECOPIER INFORMATION SHEET

INDIVIDUAL SENDING TO: _____
TITLE: _____
FIRM: _____
CITY AND STATE: _____
FAX NUMBER: 1-202-~~467-5570~~ 364-6163

FROM: Sgt. SWARTWOOD
TITLE: MTSGG. P.D.

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Comments: _____

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please call back as soon as possible (304) 263-0805. Our FAX
number is (304) 263-0808.

TO: DANA, RUDMAN

THIS PRESS RELEASE

GIVEN By CYNTHIA, GAITHER
Asst. Prosecuting Attorney

AND
CAPT ANDERSON AT

The MARTINSBURG POLICE

DEPT. ON 8-13-91

THANKS

Sgt G.B. SWARTWOOD